



**ORIGINAL**  
Federal Communications Commission  
Washington, D.C. 20554

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*96-198*

**SEP 10 1998**

EX-100 OR LATE FILED

IN REPLY REFER TO:  
9805381

**RECEIVED**

**SEP 14 1998**

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

The Honorable Jerry F. Costello  
U. S. House of Representatives  
2454 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515-1312

Dear Congressman Costello:

This is in response to your letter on behalf of your constituent, Nancy A. Dietrich, regarding the Commission's implementation of Section 255 of the Communications Act (Section 255), added by the Telecommunications Act of 1996. Section 255 requires that telecommunications equipment manufacturers and service providers must ensure that their equipment and services are accessible to persons with disabilities, to the extent that it is readily achievable to do so. In adopting Section 255, Congress gave the Commission two specific responsibilities, to exercise exclusive jurisdiction with respect to any complaint filed under Section 255, and to coordinate with the Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board (Access Board) in developing guidelines for the accessibility of telecommunications equipment and customer premises equipment.

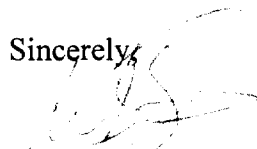
The Commission adopted a Notice of Inquiry in September 1996, initiating WT Docket 96-198 and seeking public comment on a range of general issues central to the Commission's implementation of Section 255. The Commission also adopted a Notice of Proposed Rule Making (NPRM) in April 1998, which sought public comment on a proposed framework for that implementation. The NPRM examined the Commission's legal authority to establish rules implementing Section 255, including the relationship between the Commission's authority under Section 255 and the guidelines established by the Access Board in February 1998. The NPRM further solicited comment on the interpretation of specific statutory terms that are used in Section 255, including certain aspects of the term "readily achievable," and the scope of the term "telecommunications services." In addition, the NPRM sought comment on proposals to implement and enforce the requirement that telecommunications equipment and services be made accessible to the extent readily achievable. The centerpiece of these proposals was a "fast-track" process designed to resolve many accessibility problems informally, providing consumers with quick solutions.

It is important to note that the Commission has not issued a final decision regarding any of the proposals suggested in the NPRM. The record in this proceeding closed on

*2*

August 14, 1998, and the Commission staff is currently reviewing public comments. Since the passage of Section 255, the Commission has worked closely with the Access Board and with various commenters to design an implementation framework that best reflects the intent of Congress in adopting Section 255. The comments of your constituent will be included as an informal comment in the record of WT Docket 96-198, and carefully considered, along with the many other comments, before final action is taken on this critically important matter. I appreciate your constituent's input as a way of establishing as thorough and representative a record as possible on which to base final rules implementing Section 255.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "D. B. Phythyon", is written over the word "Sincerely,".

Daniel B. Phythyon  
Chief, Wireless Telecommunications Bureau

JERRY F. COSTELLO

12TH DISTRICT - ILLINOIS

PLEASE RESPOND TO THE  
OFFICE CHECKED BELOW:

COMMITTEES:

BUDGET

TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

SCIENCE

(ON LEAVE)

# Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515-1312

July 6, 1998

William Kennard  
Chairman  
FCC  
1919 M St. NW  
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Chairman Kennard:

Enclosed you will find a copy of correspondence I received from a constituent of mine.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

  
Jerry F. Costello  
Member of Congress

JFC/hz

WFB  
16/12/98  
538

☐ 2454 RAYBURN BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515  
TEL: (202) 225-5861  
FAX: (202) 225-0286

☐ 327 W. MAIN ST.  
BELLEVILLE, IL 62220  
TEL: (618) 233-8028  
FAX: (618) 233-8785

☐ 1383 NIEDRINGHAUS AVE.  
GRANITE CITY, IL 62040  
TEL: (618) 451-7086  
FAX: (618) 451-2128

☐ 250 W. CHERRY ST.  
CARBONDALE, IL 62901  
TEL: (618) 529-3791  
FAX: (618) 549-3788

☐ 8787 STATE ST.  
EAST ST. LOUIS, IL 62203  
TEL: (618) 397-8833

☐ 1330 SWANWICK ST.  
CHESTER, IL 62233  
TEL: (618) 826-3043

NANCY A. DIETRICH  
2621 BROOKFIELD COURT  
COLUMBIA, IL 62236-2620  
June 25, 1998

The Honorable Jerry Costello  
U. S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Costello:

Re FCC Notice of Proposed Rulemaking On  
the Access Provisions of the Telecommu-  
nications Act of 1996

I have severe hearing loss and wear two hearing aids with telecoil. I would like to express my concerns regarding FCC's notice. FCC is undermining Congressional intent to make telecommunications equipment and services accessible to people with disabilities as called for in Section 255 of the Telecommunications Act of 1996.

It appears that FCC may not apply the Access Board guidelines (published on February 3, 1998) to service providers. I'm concerned about this and feel that the guidelines should apply to both manufacturers and service providers. I feel that definitive wording to that effect is needed to ensure that service providers and manufacturers clearly understand their access responsibilities in their design of new equipment.

I'm still searching for a wireless phone that is compatible with my hearing aids. Six times I had an emergency and had a need for such phone. I feel that all phones and service should be accessible, thus becoming beneficial to everyone, disabled or not.

The Act provides that a company's obligation to make products accessible, if they are "readily achievable". However, FCC is deviating from the readily achievable standard to the concept of "cost recovery". I don't feel that a manufacturer or provider should be allowed to consider whether or not it will recover costs of increased accessibility in its assessment of the readily achievable standards. If the cost recovery concept is adopted, the concept of accessibility in our society would be undermined.

For example, because telecoils were not mandated for cellular phones, most analog cell phones still don't have telecoils for hearing aid users. See above indented paragraph regarding my experiences with emergencies. I want to be able to use a cellular phone just like everyone else.

I'm concerned about FCC's omission of "enhanced services" from the coverage under Section 255, especially voice mail and automated voice response systems. I've been frustrated in dealing with complicated, fast moving automated response systems when I use voice telephones. Sometimes when I use TTY relay service to call a company, the relay operator doesn't have sufficient time to type the choice and have me respond. The operator would try one or two more times to complete critical calls.

Even calling Boston Pops long distance to follow up on the ticket order was a disaster. I ended up, having to write, thus losing valuable time!

Leaving out "enhanced services" will severely limit educational and employment opportunities and interferes with full participation in today's society.

I recall my experience with voice mail at work and was not able to put my phone on voice mail. I had a terrible time hearing voice mail when I made calls to my associates or other employees at the office. That kept me from completely performing my duties and I had to rely on others to help me with the calls.

The Honorable Jerry Costello  
June 25, 1998  
Page 2

I urge you to contact the Chairman of the FCC, William E. Kennard, about my concerns

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely yours,

*Harold Stark*